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FARMER AND SOCIALISM.

I regret that none of the more intelligent capitalist editors will discuss Socialism with the Kicker. The Jackson Cash-Book undertook it and gracefully sidestepped. Since then none has ventured. If any reference is made at all to Socialism by these papers it is in a ridiculous or non-sensical way. No attempt is made at intelligent discussion.

The least developed phase of the social question is the man on the land. Up to this time prominence has been given to the factory and mine workers. By most Socialist writers the farmer has been regarded as part capitalist and part worker, and that the "system" had no sufficiently enslaved him to force his eyes open to the cause of his troubles.

You hear a great deal about the "independent farmer." In this article I am not going to speak of the tenant farmer nor the farmer with a mortgage. I shall deal with the "ideal farmer"—the man who owns the land he himself works. The tenant farmer is in the same class with the wage slave—down and out—and the mortgaged farmer is but little better off.

The "independent" farmer is the most dependent of all producers who at all may lay claim to being exempt from the skin-game operations of the present system. It is conceded that, for the farmer, "hired help" is not profitable. How often is it the case that the farmer with 80 or 100 acres retires when "the children marry off" because he has lost the help of the children and the business will not justify hired help? Or, how many move to town to "educate the children" because it is more profitable to rent the farm than hire the help when the children are to exchange the plow or hoe for books?

What do these conditions mean? If it is not profitable to hire a man at, say, \$20 per month and board on the farm, is this not proof positive that the farmer himself is not earning more than that? Or, if he is earning more, is it not evident that he works harder than a hand would work? And do not the wife and children also work?

I haven't space to go into this question fully, but I want to set you to thinking. If you have the land, and there is no profit in hiring help, then how can there be any more in it for you than the wages of a hired man? Of course you "own your job," and to hold that job you and your family must work at times, and under conditions, that the hired man might object to. A little fever might keep the hired man out of the field at harvest time—but not you.

If I have stated the foregoing correctly, then the only difference between the wage-slave and the "independent farmer" is that the latter owns his job. That, of course, is worth having—and there seems to be no good reason why the capitalists should want him to give it up. They get his surplus in freight, elevator charges, commissions, etc., in marketing his products, and on what he buys they fix the price he must pay. Like the wage slave, he has a fair living so long as he works and has no bad luck.

The question is frequently asked, "What would be the condition of the farmer under Socialism?" As to details, no one, so far as I know, can answer such a question. In general, it will be co-operation. The details will be arranged by the farmers themselves when the time comes. And the time will not come until they are convinced that the present system is ruinous and vote for a change. When that time comes farmers and laborers will be the law makers—and not lawyers and politicians of the privileged, exploiting class.

And the change is sure to come. There is no heading it off. Wage slavery is as surely doomed as was chattel slavery. And while the "independent farmer" has generally aligned himself with the capitalist class, he is beginning to see things differently. And when he learns that great corporations are swallowing up the fertile lands of the west and, with irrigation and improved steam and electric machinery, can produce wheat at less than three cents per bushel (according to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Report on Hand and Machine Labor) the "independent farmer" will wonder how he is to compete with this new octopus!

The other day I asked a local land owner what he would do when he had to compete with the cheap production that was being inaugurated in the west. "We will have to hold 'till they sell out," he replied. How many farmers are able

to hold so long? But for those who believe this to be a solution of the problem I find a very severe jolt in the Agricultural year book of 1898. Major J. W. Powell, formerly director of the U. S. Geological survey, says that "150,000 square miles, or 96,000,000 acres, could be economically reclaimed by irrigation within the present generation."

In 1900 the wheat acreage of the United States was 42,495,385 acres. On the irrigated lands of the west wheat yields 35 bushels to the acre, while the average on other land is 12 bushels per acre. Hence we have in the west 96,000,000 acres, according to government reports, that can be reclaimed within the present generation, and this land will produce 35 bushels of wheat per acre at a cost of less than three cents per bushel. This is wheat enough to supply the world, and I fear my friend would get tired "holding" his.

That the Agricultural Trust is forming there is no doubt. And when it gets strong enough to show its teeth, the "independent farmer" will disappear just as did the shoemaker, the spinning wheel and the frail, unless the present system of capitalist co-operation is overthrown for social co-operation.

Taft's Military Policy.

By Robert Hunter in Chicago Socialist.

The Secretary of War, and candidate for the Republican nomination for the presidency, declares we shall have war between labor and capital. He thinks a great army is needed to protect capital from the wrath of the toilers.

The other day he got through an appropriation for a hundred millions to build up a great professional army.

Things look bad to him. Millions are in poverty; the unemployed are restless; the unions are on the point of a great political revolt. Working men may grow more desperate; they may even be driven to insurrection.

Evidently it appears to the secretary of war that THEIR government must be prepared with men and guns to shoot them down.

This is a cheerful prospect. It illustrates more clearly than all the books and pamphlets in the universe how near we are to despotism. It illustrates with what contempt a candidate for the presidency looks upon the people. On the eve of an election, when he will need the votes of millions of working men, he dares to put forward a military policy for the purpose of holding the people down by force.

In Germany a hundred million is spent each year to provide pensions for the aged, the sick, the crippled and maimed. Here not a cent is voted, either to provide work for the unemployed millions or to provide pensions for our industrial outcasts.

The people's money is not to be used for the people but against the people.

The wealth produced by the toilers is to be spent upon an army to protect the capitalists.

But the secretary is wrong. We are not going to have civil war or insurrection. The people are suffering, but they have not entirely lost their senses.

Even at the next election they may answer these monstrous acts, not by stones and clubs against guns and cannon, but by the ballots of the many against the ballots of the few.

AN EXPERT.

Will the Democratic party have to play the Jonah act to the Prohibition whale to be saved? We think not.—Charlottesville Democrat.

The Democratic party has a good stomach and is an expert at "swallowing" things. In 1896 it swallowed the Populist platform, in 1904 it swallowed the Republican platform and this year it need not hesitate at attempting to swallow large sections of the Prohibition and Socialist platforms, or anything else that happens to look good as a vote-catcher. The "time honored principles of Jefferson," as dished up today, seem to be very flexible and can accommodate themselves to whatever happens along.

Storms did considerable damage in adjoining counties last week. Near Bernie, in Stoddard county, several farm residences and barns were blown down and in Pemiscot county, at Steele, the residence of H. E. Doerner was wrecked and the occupants had to be cut out. They were uninjured. A house occupied by James Ellison and family was blown down and Mr. Ellison was considerably bruised. Lee Coleman's glove factory was wrecked and the residence of Tol Henderson and W. A. Cotes were greatly damaged.



Cartoon by Courtesy of Chicago Daily Socialist.
Selecting an "Intelligent Juror."

A FARMER'S VIEW.

The farmers of the cotton belt and the tobacco belt are learning a lesson. In both localities they are up against the trust. When they have finished with the octopus they may decide as many labor unions are doing—that the only way to fight the trusts is to get control of the government and wipe out the system that breeds and protects trusts. An Arkansas farmer writes to the National Co-Operator:

"I thought I would write you a few lines on unionism. I belong to Ben Lomond union. Our union is on the drag, but we hope to rally it again. Now, as to our success, I consider we made a failure last year in one way, but a success in another. We failed to get our price for cotton, but we have learned that we have got no friends in this fight and that we have got to go it alone. Now, as to the way to do that is the great question."

So this farmer learned at least one thing. He learned that "we have no friends in this fight." That is an important lesson and is worth all it cost. When the farmers learn that, to get justice, they themselves must strike the blow that unfetters them, then they will be in a position to act intelligently. The same farmer continues:

"The first step to take is to get out of debt. As long as we are in debt we are slaves. We may figure and plan all we please, but the octopus sits back and laughs at our folly. How are we to get out of debt? By economizing and living hard, of course. There is no other way."

So this farmer has learned another lesson. He realized that a farmer in debt is a slave! It is worth something to have learned that. Most farmers, with every pig mortgaged as well as the growing crop, will boast of the glories of living in a "free country" and walk ten miles to vote to continue the system that enslaves him.

No doubt my Arkansas farmer will do that thing this fall. The fact that he proposes to win the battle by "living hard" proves that he has not yet located the breastworks of the enemy. But he's learning.

If you want to get rid of rats buy a ten cent can of concentrated lye and sprinkle it liberally in every rat or mouse run possible. Do this about twice a year. Rats, as is well known, frequent moist places beneath floors, and their feet are always moist. As soon as they step on the lye it causes their feet to burn; then they lick their feet, and there is more burn; if they smell of it, there is more burn, and they immediately emigrate. This has been found far more effective than traps, dogs, cats, or poison, and it does as well for mice as rats.

BUSINESS INSTINCT.

"Did Bessum and Goodin get their money honestly?"

"Well, each ran a bank of his own, and each bank busted. Bessum was made receiver of Goodin's bank, and Goodin was made receiver of Bessum's bank. So they at least got their money legally."

TALKING IT OVER.

The Kicker article on the "blue laws" inaugurated by our "reform" statesmen(?) has been pretty generally discussed throughout the county, and many who had not considered the matter in the light as put before them by the Kicker were set to thinking. They, too, believe it is wrong for a steamboat or railroad to do business on Sunday if it is wrong for a merchant to sell ice cream, soda or cigars.

Some apologists for the present crazy-quilt system seek to defend it by arguing that the traffic of the steamers and railroads is necessary—that we need mail and that people want to travel. To these it is only necessary to say that the Sunday traffic is not for public convenience, but for profit. If there was no money in it there would not be a train or a steamer turn a wheel on Sundays—nor any other day.

The Kicker is not annoyed by the trains and boats. I am not asking that they suspend traffic on Sundays. But I do object to a lopsided "lid." If the law only applies to peanut vendors and does not reach those higher up, then it is a bad law.

In the yards, roundhouses and offices of the various railroads of the county will be found, on any Sunday, an army of men at work. These men are not working because they want to, but because they must. Is not that way of "breaking the Sabbath" quite as demoralizing as handing out a cigar?

Saturday evening Mrs. Hafner asked me to get her some oranges. I went down town—and forgot them. She wanted them for Sunday dinner. The next morning I could not get them. But I could patronize the railroad, the express, the telegraph or the telephone. And in all these persons were employed doing Sunday work. Why must individuals toe the mark while corporations are permitted to do otherwise? Is it because corporations have no souls and therefore cannot sin?

By referendum vote the Socialist party of Missouri nominated the following candidates to appear on the ballot at the primary, August 4: Governor, W. H. Garver, Chillicothe; Lieut.-Gov., U. F. Sargent, Springfield; Secretary of State, F. Barker, Poplar Bluff; Auditor, Frank Forster, Hannibal; Treasurer, C. E. Etherton, Kansas City; Attorney-General, J. F. Williams, West Plains; Railroad Commissioner, U. S. Barnesley, Monett; Supreme Court, L. G. Pope, St. Louis; Court of Appeals, Otto Vierling, St. Louis.

The Charleston Republican objects to the Kicker's statement that the Republicans of Missouri had already elected their millionaires as delegates-at-large to select a presidential candidate. That paper might also object to the statement that the four alternates-at-large are gentlemen of color. How can the negroes hope to improve their morals while mingling with politicians? Farmers, patronize the Kicker.

A HUGE JOKE.

The joke of the season is the alleged effort of the newspapers to have the present congress place wood pulp on the free list. Wood pulp is used in the manufacture of paper and the "molders of public opinion" are getting squeezed by the paper trust. They think that to remove the tariff will invite competition and bring down prices. Alleged Republicans as well as alleged Democrats are standing shoulder to shoulder in this fight against the trust.

As a result an organization was formed and a bill introduced in congress to remove the tariff on wood pulp. At intervals the Publishers' Association, with headquarters in New York, sends out special letters to all publishers urging them to "telegraph your congressman and senators to support the bill and follow this up with personal letters." I sometimes suspect that the telegraph trust is behind this scheme to get the suckers to part with their coin.

At any rate the Kicker has wasted neither postage or money in urging the impossible. I have made up my mind to stand the hold-up until the people get wise enough to send people to congress who are in sympathy with them, and who will work to abolish the system that breeds trusts. The capitalist system breeds trusts just as a nasty hen-house breeds lice. In either case the remedy is to remove the cause.

Although a petition containing 1,600 names was presented to the New Madrid county court asking that the question of local option be submitted to the voters, the proposition was turned down. There seemed to be but one way to do it, since the petition was far above the legal requirement. The court was enjoined from granting the election and seemed glad to obey the injunction. New Madrid is as ring-ridden as any county in the state. It is the home of our circuit judge, and whether Judge Riley intended it or not, he certainly gave the "reform" movement in Scott county a severe setback with the inauguration of his "blue laws." The object seems to be to give the people an object lesson in "reform" before adopting it.

That the law against cruelty to animals is almost a dead letter hereabouts is a pity. However, in some sections it is rigidly enforced and there seems to be an awakening in some sections of Cape Girardeau county. Stearly Stroder of near Burfordville was arrested one day last week by Constable Bart Points, charged with mistreating a horse, and the next day Linus Stroder was arrested on the same charge. They were hauling wood for the Stroder schoolhouse. One of the horses in Linus Stroder's team balked and couldn't be persuaded to pull. They then fastened a chain around his neck and to the rear of Stearly's wagon, which was in front. Then Stearly drove his team up, making the balky horse pull. They were caught fine \$25 by Justice of the Peace Geo. Holmes.

AT IT AGAIN.

The Democratic and Republican parties are again bringing out their harmless stuffed clubs to make people believe they are really engaged in a scrap. The club that seems to be the best padded and has done service for fifty years is labelled "tariff." The covering is sort of peeled off around the edges and the people are beginning to see the stuffing, but both parties will try to make us believe our vision is faulty. Says the Globe-Democrat:

Again the Democratic campaign cry is raised that the protective tariff is the mother of the trusts. Great would be the disappointment of the people to find, if they accepted this view, that the protective duties now paid have scarcely an appreciable weight in the matter. Trusts are as numerous and powerful in free trade countries as others, and in protective countries some of the biggest trusts deal in the articles that are admitted free. It is so in the United States with petroleum, which is on the free list. Attention has just been called in congress to the banana trust. Bananas are on the free list, but the monopolistic grip on fruit, an article in general demand throughout the country, is absolute. When the stock of bananas in the United States is large, the trust has a habit of destroying what it considers the surplus, and can thus keep up the price.

While the Globe-Democrat shatters the claims of the tariff reformers, and tells the truth when it says that trusts exist in free trade countries as well as in tariff protected countries, yet that paper carefully neglects to suggest any remedy for the trust evil. Being itself of the news trust it could not be expected to do so.

But what must be thought of a system that finds profit in "destroying" what is considered the surplus? When there are millions of men, women and children hungry? Bananas are perishable and are destroyed rather than put on the market at less than the established price. Goods that are not perishable are held until the price is forced from the consumers.

While at Hot Springs a few years ago I met a business man from the lower coast of Florida. He told me that from the ships arriving from the banana regions of South America the finest bunches of bananas could be bought for 35 cents and an ordinary bunch for 25 cents. If this fruit can be sold at a profit at such a price in Florida, what do you suppose the producer gets?

But we are not concerned about the producer; we are considering the consumer. These bananas that can be bought in Florida for 25 cents a bunch are sold here in Benton at 25 cents a dozen—or about \$4 per bunch—and the merchants say there is very little profit to them at that. It is not unusual to hear of train loads of bananas being dumped into a river, or otherwise destroyed, to prevent a "glut in the market."

No, the tariff has nothing to do with this—for there is none. Nor is the tariff "the mother of trusts." Capitalism is the old she devil that feeds and fattens them all. While the tariff is a sort of "wet nurse," yet the trust can and does flourish without it. The difference between a protected trust and an unprotected one is that the former needs only to skin us alone, while the latter must be international and skin others besides us.

Destroy the system that makes it possible for the scheming few to rob the beguiled many and the trust and tariff questions will disappear.

ATTENTION, PLEASE.

Two weeks ago all subscribers whose time expired in this month were notified. Many have renewed and some have not. They who do not renew before the close of the month will be dropped from the list. I have no delinquents subscribers on my list and will carry none. I cannot afford to. I must treat all alike. Not far from here lives a reliable German farmer who objects to paying in advance. The other day he came in, said he wanted the paper, but would not pay until the end of the year—that he did not propose to pay for a thing until he got it. He said he did not get paid for his crop until he delivered it. "But," said I, "suppose you had a thousand bushels of wheat, and no person had use for more than one bushel, and you had to sell on orders and deliver through the mail, with no assurance that the money would be paid when delivered, wouldn't you ask your customers to send cash with order?"

This is one class of customers a newspaper has to deal with, but, fortunately, very rare. Saturday another farmer came in to make his

troubles known. "Three years ago," he said "I paid up the Record and ordered it stopped. I changed my postoffice from New Hamburg to Chaffee. For a long time I did not get the paper, but last March it began coming to Chaffee. Now I have a 'dun' from a Chicago collecting agency demanding \$3.00. Do I have to pay?"

I told him he did not. These collecting agencies get half of what they can scare out of the people. If you pay no attention to their "duns" they will soon tire of wasting postage.

Which plan do you prefer—the paper that stops when the time you have paid for expires, or the never-stop papers that work through the disreputable collecting agency?

If your subscription has expired and you do not want to miss an issue, better send in a paper dollar by mail at my risk.

THE SOUTHEAST.

Dunklin Democrat.—An informal convention of the Socialist party of Dunklin county, assembled at the city hall, at Kennett, at 3:30 p. m. April 30th and was organized by the election of W. A. Warren, of Cardwell, temporary chairman, and B. F. Young, of Senath, temporary secretary. The following were elected as central committee until the election: Henry McGuire, of Salem township; R. J. Turner, of Freeborn township; P. A. Fitzgerald, of Buffalo township. The organization was made permanent by electing P. A. Fitzgerald, of Cardwell, chairman, and R. F. Liddell, of Senath, secretary. W. H. Warren was employed as county organizer, and put in the field to round up the forces.

Fredericktown News.—One of the heaviest rains that has visited this section for years fell last Monday night. It will take hundreds of dollars to put the streets of the city in good condition again as the rain washed big holes in many of them; all of the gutters in the city are filled up so that you cannot tell where the gutters formerly were, at 11 o'clock Monday night people living along Saline creek were forced to leave their homes on account of the water; relief parties with lanterns were up and down the creek nearly all night rendering assistance to those needing it.

Sikeston Enterprise.—John Jones, living one mile north of McMullin became enraged at his wife for some cause which we failed to learn and took and iron poker and beat her very cruelly on last Thursday evening and on Saturday he told his wife he was going to work and departed, but he has never showed up any more. Mrs. Jones got out a state warrant for him and if he is caught he will probably get what wife beaters deserve as we learn that this is not the first time he has beat her.

Rolla Sharpshooter.—Col. L. S. Edwards, who came here to lecture on Socialism and "How you lost the market" but found the court house looked against him and was turned away from the School of Mines with the statement, that nothing bordering on politics would be allowed, met with an immense audience down at Benton in Scott county. It seems that Folk made a political speech at the School of Mines the next week, however. But work like that is what turns Democrats into Socialists and starts Republicans to thinking.

Charleston Enterprise.—From some sections of this county comes the report that wheat is failing very fast and that if the rainy weather continues the damage will be much greater than at first anticipated. In other sections where the land is higher and the water passes away and is not allowed to remain on the growing wheat, it is said this cereal never looked better.

Malden Merit.—Who's going to vote you this year, Mr. Farmer? Will it be some tin-horn politician from town, or will it be some would-be political leader of your own community? We would advise that you give all the "horse laugh" and vote according to your own judgment.

AN EXCEPTION.

Binks—"Very few women have any knowledge of parliamentary law."

Jinks—"You should hear my wife. She has been speaker of the house for the last twelve years."—New York Press.

THE STYLE.

"Why do you wear that ridiculous hat?" he growled.
"Do you really think it ridiculous?" she replied graciously.
"How lovely of you. I was afraid it wasn't quite the style!"—Philadelphia Ledger.